

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for automatically distributing a software update to a network of devices controlled by an organization, the method comprising:

receiving application and system information from one or more inoculation clients installed on said devices, said receiving performed via peer-to-peer communication;

comparing said application and system information with application and version information in a global update repository to determine if an update exists for a corresponding application controlled by an inoculation client;

queueing said update if an update exists for an application controlled by an inoculation client;

receiving a communication from said corresponding inoculation client checking for available distribution jobs; and

transmitting said update to said corresponding inoculation client in response to said receiving a communication if an update exists for an application controlled by said corresponding inoculation client.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

configuring an inoculation server distributed across one or more of the devices; and

performing an initial connection between said inoculation server and said global update repository.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said application and system information includes operating system information and version.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said application and system information includes installed software applications and versions.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said application and system information includes network information.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said application and system information is received in Extensible Markup Language (XML) format.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein said queuing said update includes linking said update package and said corresponding application in a database table.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the global update repository is a centralized repository that manages operating systems and software to be delivered to inoculation servers.
9. The method of claim 8, therein said global update repository mines, retrieves, and archives external update information.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein said external update information is mined and retrieved from external security websites.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said global update repository uses web spiders.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein said comparing includes utilizing an HTTP GET or POST command.
13. The method of claim 9, wherein said external update information contains a vendor type, said vendor type being automatic download and release, automatic download and manually confirm release, or manually download and confirm.
14. The method of claim 1, wherein said comparing is performed by an inventory control engine.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein said queuing is performed by a distribution engine.
16. An inoculation server for automatically distributing a software update to a network of devices controlled by an organization, the inoculation server distributed among the devices and comprising:
  - a user interface;
  - an inventory control engine coupled to said user interface, to one or more inoculation clients, and to a global update repository;
  - a distribution engine coupled to said user interface and said inventory control engine;
  - a client control module coupled to said distribution engine and to said one or more inoculation clients; and

a database coupled to said inventory control engine, said distribution engine, and said client control module.

17. An inoculation server for automatically distributing a software update to a network of devices controlled by an organization, the inoculation server distributed among the devices and comprising:

- an inoculation client application and system information peer-to-peer receiver;
- an application and system information global update repository information comparer coupled to said inoculation client application and system information peer-to-peer receiver;
- an update queuer coupled to said application and system information global update repository information comparer;
- an inoculation client available distribution jobs communication receiver; and
- an update transmitter coupled to said update queuer and to said inoculation client available distribution jobs communication receiver.

18. A system for automatically distributing a software update to a network of devices controlled by an organization, comprising:

- one or more inoculation servers distributed among the devices;
- one or more inoculation clients distributed among the devices and in peer-to-peer communication with one or more of said one or more inoculation servers; and
- a global update repository coupled to said one or more inoculation servers.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein said one or more inoculation servers include:
- a user interface;
  - an inventory control engine coupled to said user interface, to one or more inoculation clients, and to a global update repository;
  - a distribution engine coupled to said user interface and said inventory control engine;
  - a client control module coupled to said distribution engine and to said one or more inoculation clients; and
  - a database coupled to said inventory control engine, said distribution engine, and said client control module.
20. An apparatus for automatically distributing a software update to a network of devices controlled by an organization, the apparatus comprising:
- means for receiving application and system information from one or more inoculation clients installed on said devices, said receiving performed via peer-to-peer communication;
  - means for comparing said application and system information with application and version information in a global update repository to determine if an update exists for a corresponding application controlled by an inoculation client;
  - means for queueing said update if an update exists for an application controlled by an inoculation client;
  - means for receiving a communication from said corresponding inoculation client checking for available distribution jobs; and

means for transmitting said update to said corresponding inoculation client in response to said receiving a communication if an update exists for an application controlled by said corresponding inoculation client.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising:

means for configuring an inoculation server distributed across one or more of the devices;  
and

means for performing an initial connection between said inoculation server and said global update repository.

22. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said application and system information includes operating system information and version.

23. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said application and system information includes installed software applications and versions.

24. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said application and system information includes network information.

25. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said application and system information is received in Extensible Markup Language (XML) format.

26. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said queuing said update includes linking said update package and said corresponding application in a database table.
27. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the global update repository is a centralized repository that manages operating systems and software to be delivered to inoculation servers.
28. The apparatus of claim 20, therein said global update repository mines, retrieves, and archives external update information.
29. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein said external update information is mined and retrieved from external security websites.
30. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein said global update repository uses web spiders.
31. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said means for comparing includes means for utilizing an HTTP GET or POST command.
32. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein said external update information contains a vendor type, said vendor type being automatic download and release, automatic download and manually confirm release, or manually download and confirm.
33. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said means for comparing is an inventory control engine.

34. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said means for queuing is a distribution engine.

35. A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for automatically distributing a software update to a network of devices controlled by an organization, the method comprising:

receiving application and system information from one or more inoculation clients installed on said devices, said receiving performed via peer-to-peer communication;

comparing said application and system information with application and version information in a global update repository to determine if an update exists for a corresponding application controlled by an inoculation client;

queueing said update if an update exists for an application controlled by an inoculation client;

receiving a communication from said corresponding inoculation client checking for available distribution jobs; and

transmitting said update to said corresponding inoculation client in response to said receiving a communication if an update exists for an application controlled by said corresponding inoculation client.